TO: Dr. Barge, State School Superintendent, Georgia Department of Education

CC: Dr. Mescon, University President of Columbus State University

FROM: Christopher Van Houten, M.A.T. Student at Columbus State University

DATE: June 5, 2014

RE: Partner with Military Child Education Coalition and Implement a Professional Development Curriculum Requirement for Georgia Universities and Educators

There is an ongoing need for teachers to understand the trends and issues that students of military families withstand on a daily basis. Due to the stressors that are placed on the military parent and family members, educators need to be aware of these stressors in order to help the student cope with these changes. There are currently only two universities nationwide that offer master’s-level degree training in this area. Sadly, this is not a curriculum requirement for teacher certification. This proposal is to change the teacher certification curriculum in Georgia universities in so that all educators, current and future, will be required to complete the Professional Development Program sponsored by the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC).

Over two million students have had parents deployed since the start of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Many of these students have experienced multiple deployments and over 1.3 million military children are currently in our nation’s public schools. These children undergo unique situations that can affect a child’s academic growth and social-emotional development. The MCEC Professional Development Program will help each current and future educator:

* Differentiate social/emotional aspects of children dealing with change
* Recognize how a family member’s military experience affects the child
* Analyze current transition practices/programs for entering and exiting mobile students by utilizing research and networking activities
* Identify amplified transition challenges of exceptional needs children
* Identify and discuss the effects of mobilization and deployment separation on children

Incorporating this into the education core curriculum will ensure future educators are aware of the trends and issues that students of military families face, and will help the student adapt to his/her school setting during challenging times. Additionally, this training will provide current educators with tools to help students of military families while meeting a continuing education licensing requirement.

This proposal can be implemented starting the spring term 2015 for all new students attending Georgia universities who are pursuing teacher certification, and be made a requirement for all currently licensed educators to complete the MCEC Professional Development Program Continuing Education Unit by December 31, 2016. With the spring term 2015 soon approaching, I would like to talk further with you about this professional development program at your earliest convenience.